



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Environmental Affairs

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January 2, 2004

CERTIFICATE OF THE SECRETARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS ON THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

PROJECT NAME	: Pittsfield Municipal Airport Improvement Projects
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY	: Pittsfield
PROJECT WATERSHED	: Housatonic River
EOEA NUMBER	: 12480
PROJECT PROPONENT	: Pittsfield Municipal Airport Commission
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR	: November 8, 2003

The Secretary of Environmental Affairs hereby determines that the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) submitted on the above project **adequately and properly complies** with the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (M.G.L. c. 30, ss. 61-62H) and with its implementing regulations (301 CMR 11.00).

Project Description

Pittsfield Municipal Airport is a general aviation airport, which is located in the southwest quadrant of the city near the towns of Lenox and Richmond. It is surrounded by Shaker Mountain to the northeast, South Mountain to the east, Mahanna Cobble to the south, and Lenox Mountain to the southwest. Residential communities are within close proximity of the airport's eastern perimeter, with other adjacent land uses including industrial, agricultural, and protected open space.

The airport operates Runway (R/W) 8/26, a 5000-foot runway, and R/W14/32, a 3,500-foot crosswind runway. The site also contains a fixed based operator (FBO), terminal and hangar space, and parking for 57 automobiles. The airport currently averages 7,700 operations per year (opy) (takeoffs and landings) for small aircraft (Airport Reference Code C-II). Business

jet operations are forecast to increase 16,200 opy by 2018, from 25% of total opy to approximately 30%. The Airport Master Plan Update (AMPU) was completed by the Pittsfield Airport commission in 2001 in consultation with a Planning Advisory Committee.

The proposed project involves the following:

- Extending R/W 26 northeasterly from the existing 5,000 linear feet (lf) to 5,950 lf, and construction of a partial parallel taxiway from the new terminus of the runway to the existing taxiway. Extending R/W 26 would require the closing of South Mountain Road.
- Constructing runway safety areas (RSAs) on R/W 8/26 (400 feet wide and 1,000 feet from the runway-end)
- Installing a full precision approach system for R/W 8/26 and relocated navigational aids
- Increasing the separation between R/W 8/26 and Taxiway A by relocating Taxiway A
- Demolishing the existing terminal building and constructing a new terminal building with realigned access
- Expanding the existing automobile parking and aircraft aprons
- Extending municipal water to the facility and complete sewer improvements
- Constructing a corporate hangar east of the new terminal building
- Developing a vegetation management plan and removing vegetative obstructions within the approach and transition surfaces of all four runways

According to the DEIR, the proposed work is designed to improve safety by removing ground obstructions, and increase airfield capacity by capturing a larger percentage of jet aircraft operations.

Jurisdiction and Project Review

The project is subject to review and required a mandatory Environmental Impact Report (EIR) pursuant to 301 CMR 11.03 (3)(a)(2) of the MEPA regulations since it involves alteration requiring a Variance in accordance with the Wetlands Protection Act. The project will require a variety of permits and Article 97 approval for a transfer of conservation land. Because the project involves state funding, MEPA jurisdiction broadly extends to all aspects of the project with the potential to cause significant Damage to the Environment.

Alternatives Analysis

The FEIR contains an analysis of the several alternatives including reducing the existing runway length to accommodate full RSAs, runway extensions varying in length from 500, 800 and 950 additional feet, as well as full and partial RSAs. The report also includes the no-build alternative to establish baseline conditions.

The FEIR should further address the feasibility and comparative environmental impacts of at least one additional runway extension alternative. Such an alternative may allow for relocating South Mountain Road and reducing traffic disturbance. The potential alternative

would meet the minimum runway extension to achieve operational benefits described in the AMPU, while further reducing or avoiding the environmental impacts and traffic inconvenience of the preferred alternative.

Article 97

Construction of the preferred alternative will result in the conversion of 20.87 acres of land in the Wild Acres Conservation Area. The proponent plans to replace the lost acreage with several parcels, consisting of wetland and upland resources and open fields, totaling approximately 163.86 acres. According to the DEIR, the Pittsfield Conservation Commission has evaluated the preliminary proposal, and consultation is ongoing. The FEIR must provide a fuller discussion of the details regarding the proposed land swap (including acreage, existing and proposed use) to ensure that it meets the requirements of EOEAs Article 97 Land Disposition Policy, demonstrating that no feasible equivalent alternative for the project exists, and that land of equal or greater resource value will be protected as compensation for the loss of protected open space.

Agricultural Land

The project will result in conversion of 69.22 acres of land containing prime agricultural soils. The proponent has consulted with the Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR), and prepared an on-site mitigation plan to address the agricultural land impacts of the project. According to the FEIR, the proponent will seek to acquire approximately 71.51 acres of agricultural land and deed it to the Wild Acres Conservation Area. Portions of the farmland to be deeded will be designated for agricultural uses. The proponent has committed to continued consultation with DAR regarding the deed language during the land transfer to ensure that the proposed measures will adequately compensate for the loss of active agricultural land. The FEIR should further detail the proposed plan, which must be included as a Section 61 mitigation commitment.

Wetlands

The project will involve alteration of 6.73 acres of wetland resources (comprised of 6.55 acres of vegetated wetland and 0.18 acres of open water), primarily at runway-end 26 due to the expansion of the runway safety area. As directed in the Scope, the proponent has provided a detailed description of wetland resources, impacted wetlands resource types and proposed a mitigation plan in the DEIR. The proponent has evaluated variable runway and taxiway dimensions to reduce impacts to the adjacent wetlands resources. According the DEIR, wetlands impacts would not change significantly, since the FAA-required safety area drives the impacts.

To mitigate wetlands impacts, the proponent has committed to constructing an 8.43-acre wetlands replacement network, spread out over six sites (a 1.2:1.0 ratio). The replication sites

will be constructed primarily north of runway-end 26, and east of runway-end 32, adjacent to existing wetlands resource areas. These areas will also provide some compensatory flood storage for floodplain impacts. Construction will also be phased to minimize simultaneous land disturbance, which itself reduces potential erosion and sedimentation into wetland resource areas. The proponent has also committed to preserving approximately 60.5 acres of existing wetlands through a land transfer to the Wild Acres Conservation area. The wetlands are located either on-airport or on properties to be acquired by the proponent.

The Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act Regulations require a demonstration that there is no reasonable alternative to the preferred project, and that the least damaging practicable alternative has been selected. The FEIR should therefore demonstrate that the adverse wetlands impacts have been avoided to the maximum feasible extent, and that the proposed measures will adequately mitigate the impacts of the project, particularly regarding loss of flood storage capacity. Unavoidable loss of wetlands must be compensated for on a greater than 1:1 basis, and preferably on a 1.5:1 ratio, due to the high failure rate for replicated wetlands.

The proponent has committed to monitoring the wetlands replication site during construction and for a period of three consecutive growing seasons to measure vegetative cover, and to minimize invasive plant species. An onsite wetlands specialist should be engaged to manage the mitigation program. The reconstructed wetlands will be maintained as part of the airport's existing Vegetation Management Plan.

Rare Species

Construction of the proposed project will impact rare species habitat. According to the DEIR, surveys over the past three years have not indicated the presence of the Grasshopper Sparrow. The proponent has committed to a mowing program to protect the grassland bird during the construction period. Other area not subject to construction impacts will be marked and maintained as protected habitat during the nesting season.

The proponent also will install obstruction lighting in lieu of vegetation removal to minimize impacts to the Wild Acres reservation. Work in estimated habitat for the Chestnut Sedge will be conducted in accordance with the Vegetation Management Plan to further mitigate the impacts of the project.

The FEIR should provide additional information regarding surveys the proponent has conducted to confirm whether any state-listed rare plant species, which the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) has identified as endangered or of special concern, will be directly or indirectly impacted by construction of the preferred alternative. Any loss of a state-listed rare plant species is considered a "take" requiring a Conservation Permit under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act. Unavoidable impacts must be mitigated to the

maximum extent possible. The proponent must consult with NHESP while preparing the botanical survey and summarize the results in the FEIR.

Traffic

The preferred alternative involves an eastward shift of R/W 8/26 to construct the RSAs. While the proposed plan will not impact Barker Road, it will result in the closure of South Mountain Road. According to the DEIR, closure of South Mountain Road will not result in significant degradation of the Level of Service or access along area roadways. However, vehicle access and travel time to adjacent roadways will be modified and increased. The intersection of Barker Road and Housatonic Street will be degraded from LOS C to D, with increased delay in the morning peak hours. The proponent has included two relocation scenarios for South Mountain Road, both of which result in additional impacts to wetlands resources. The proposal, and potential mitigation measures, should be further addressed in the FEIR.

Historic/Archaeological

The proponent has consulted with the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) and performed the requested intensive (locational) archaeological survey. According to the results, the proposed project will not adversely impact significant archaeological/cultural resources. However, MHC has identified a structure proposed for demolition that is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The proponent has committed to providing photo documentation of the buildings prior to any construction activities. The proponent should continue to work with MHC to develop a Memorandum of Agreement to ensure that the site record conforms to MHC specifications.

Stormwater/Water Quality

According to the SEIR, there will be no increase in peak runoff rates as a result of this project. Best Management Practices contained in the DEP Stormwater Management Policy, including detention basins, water quality swales, and sediment sumps will be designed to achieve the 80% Total Suspended Solids removal performance standard. The proponent has committed to monitoring and maintenance of this system to ensure that water quality is not degraded as a result of this project. The proponent has also agreed to employ erosion/sedimentation control measures to minimize adverse impacts to the onsite wetlands resources during construction.

Construction Impacts

The proponent is seeking Commonwealth financial assistance for this project. Therefore the proponent must participate in DEP's Clean Air Construction Initiative to minimize emissions from diesel-powered construction equipment. Best management practices should also be utilized, such as covered trucks and soil stockpiles, as well as construction equipment wheel

washing, to reduce fugitive emissions in proximity to residential neighborhoods. The proponent should also consult with DEP regarding appropriate recycling/reuse of asphalt, brick and/or concrete demolition debris.

Noise

The DEIR contains an analysis of the noise impacts of the proposed project with and without Stage II aircraft. Noise modeling as well as on-site noise measurements were included in the analysis. The study results indicate that shifting R/W 8/26 will decrease noise impacts at runway-end 8, which is in close proximity to dense residential areas, and will not have a significant impact on sensitive receptors.

In response to Planning Advisory Committee recommendations, the proponent has developed a voluntary noise abatement program, and included it in the DEIR. The proposed program includes measures to limit nighttime and touch and go aircraft operations during sensitive periods. The gradual phasing in of Stage III aircraft should also mitigate the noise impacts of the project.

Section 61 Finding

The FEIR must contain a Draft Section 61 Finding that includes proposed mitigation measures for all areas of impact. The final Section 61 Finding will be included with all state permits issued for this project, and will be considered binding upon the proponent as mitigation commitments. A copy of the Final Section 61 Findings must be forwarded to the MEPA Office.

January 2, 2004

DATE

/s/ Ellen Roy Herzfelder

Ellen Roy Herzfelder, Secretary

Comments received:

9/29/2003	Ann Truran
11/10/2003	National Energy & Gas Transmission
11/10/2003	Legacy Banks
11/10/2003	Systems Sales Support Company
11/12/2003	Colt
11/12/2003	Unistress
11/12/2003	Michelle Johnson
11/12/2003	Courtney Lane
11/12/2003	Sydney Smithers
11/12/2003	Kevin Kinne
11/12/2003	Michael MacDonald
11/12/2003	Colleen Duffy
11/12/2003	Jerome Galvin
11/12/2003	Melissa Massaconi
11/12/2003	Sandra Underwood
11/12/2003	Lori Levinson
11/12/2003	Sharon Nolan
11/12/2003	Mary McLaughlin
11/12/2003	Beverly Naughton
11/13/2003	Colleen Bartini
11/13/2003	Becky Paquette
11/13/2003	Mark McKenna
11/13/2003	Shaun Kelly
11/13/2003	Teddi Laurin
11/13/2003	Barton Raser
11/13/2003	Alice Bonnet
11/13/2003	David Bruce
11/14/2003	Stephen Conley
11/14/2003	Lynne Carlotto
11/14/2003	Dick Sullivan
11/14/2003	Robert Trask
11/14/2003	Robert Muller (K.B toys)
11/17/2003	Stephanie Taylor
11/17/2003	Duncan McQueen
11/17/2003	Jason Baumgart
11/17/2003	Kelly Palmer
11/17/2003	Jeffrey Rose

11/17/2003 Teddi Laurin
11/17/2003 Raymond Dotchin (Colt)
11/17/2003 Cranwell Resort 2
11/17/2003 Tony King (Clark Art Institute) 2
11/17/2003 Michael Conforti (Clark Art Institute)
11/17/2003 Al Ball (Netjets) 2
11/17/2003 Jim Johnson / SKD, Inc.
11/18/2003 Virginia DuBois (Interprint, Inc.)
11/18/2003 John Gerzabella
11/18/2003 Jason Baumgart
11/18/2003 Roland Morin (Interprint, Inc.)
11/18/2003 William Hines (Interprint, Inc.)
11/18/2003 Paul Reeves
11/18/2003 Jens Bauer
11/18/2003 David Bissailon (Berkshire Chamber of Commerce)
11/18/2003 Morton and Elaine Kaplan
11/18/2003 Marcia Beverly (MTD Realty)
11/18/2003 M. Callahan Inc.
11/18/2003 Kimberly Kuhlwein (Callahan Outdoor Advertising)
11/18/2003 Robert P Quagliani
11/18/2003 George Jervas (SKI Bousquet)
11/18/2003 Kelly Palmer
11/18/2003 Robert Gniadek
11/18/2003 Mr. & Mrs Miller
11/18/2003 Edwin Watroba
11/18/2003 WM."Smitty" Pignatelli (State Representative)
11/18/2003 Ellen Arnold
11/19/2003 Alinda Shank (The Berkshire Eagle)
11/19/2003 Nancy Steele
11/19/2003 Andrew Mick (New England Newspaper)
11/19/2003 Timothy Carlo (Legacy Financial Services)
11/19/2003 Steven Pierce (Legacy Banks)
11/19/2003 Robert Mercer
11/19/2003 Eva Sheridan (The Red Lion Inn)
11/19/2003 Anne McLaughlin (The Red Lion Inn)
11/19/2003 John Fitzpatrick (Country Curtains)
11/19/2003 Bruce Finn (The Red Lion Inn)
11/19/2003 Nancy Fitzpatrick (The Red Lion Inn)
11/19/2003 Jayne Church (The Red Lion Inn)
11/19/2003 Brian Butterworth (The Red Lion Inn)
11/19/2003 Daniel Callahan (Callahan Sign Co.)
11/19/2003 Christine Hoek (Clark Art Institute)

11/19/2003 Matthew Scarafoni (Scarafoni Financial Group)
11/20/2003 Raymond Callahan
11/20/2003 Richard Scapin
11/20/2003 Stanley Baylock
11/24/2003 Judy Levesque (Greylock Federal)
11/24/2003 Katherine Lambert (Legacy Portfolio Mang.)
11/24/2003 Liz Bissell (Legacy Banks)
11/24/2003 Matthew Kerwood (City of Pittsfield)
11/24/2003 Kathleen Daury (Legacy Banks)
11/24/2003 Michael DiCenzo (Legacy Banks)
11/24/2003 Ellen Roberto
11/24/2003 Massachusetts Historical Commission
11/24/2003 Joseph Moran
11/24/2003 Carlton Dodge
11/24/2003 Yvonne Pearson (Downtown Inc.) 2
11/24/2003 Gina Cinelli Birchall (Berkshire Life)
11/24/2003 James Zilinski (Berkshire Life)
11/24/2003 Kevin Kinne
11/24/2003 Eugene Dellea (Hillcrest Hospital Campus)
11/24/2003 Matthew Harris (Village Ventures)
11/24/2003 Maggie Geist (Assoc. to Preserve Cape Cod, Inc.)
11/24/2003 Denise Johns (BATC)
11/24/2003 Marc Johns (Chef's Signature)
11/24/2003 David Field (Interprint)
11/24/2003 Dennis Murphy (Mass Mutual)
11/24/2003 Jacqueline McNinch (Legacy Banks)
11/24/2003 Steven Greenleef
11/26/2003 Joseph DiNicola
11/26/2003 Sandra Zink
11/26/2003 Mark French
11/28/2003 Richard Belair (Canyon Ranch)
11/28/2003 Monica Ruth Pattangall
11/28/2003 Mary Grant (Mass College of Liberal Arts)
11/28/2003 Richard Whalen (Legacy Banks)
11/28/2003 Berkshire Chamber of Commerce
12/01/2003 David Carlson
12/02/2003 John Zuber
12/02/2003 Alice Wazesinski
12/02/2003 Leslie Ratbun
12/02/2003 Gwendolyn Gilbert
12/02/2003 Peter Barnes
12/02/2003 Donald Zukowski (MeadWestvaco)

12/02/2003	Don Hunter (Lee Community Devel. Corp.)
12/02/2003	Barbara Higgins
12/02/2003	Peter Brett
12/04/2003	Stephen Foley
12/04/2003	William Leary
12/04/2003	John O'Brien
12/04/2003	John Anthony (Maxymillian)
12/04/2003	James H. Maxymillian (Maxymillian)
12/04/2003	Melissa LaFrance
12/04/2003	James Stakenas (Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts)
12/04/2003	Denise Richardello (Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts)
12/04/2003	Dr. Scott Kalicki (Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts)
12/04/2003	Lori Gazzillo (Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts)
12/04/2003	Mary Gingras
12/04/2003	Sandra Hauser
12/04/2003	Priscilla Colburn
12/05/2003	Robert Everhart
12/05/2003	Linda Lapoinke
12/05/2003	Joanne Parsons
12/05/2003	Jeffrey Cook
12/05/2003	Leslie Rathbun
12/08/2003	Representative Daniele Bosley
12/08/2003	David Reinhart (MeadWestvaco)
12/08/2003	Martin & Oliveira
12/08/2003	Anna Fruran
12/08/2003	Robert Watroba
12/08/2003	Terence Chiaretto
12/09/2003	Lorinda Ackley Mazur
12/09/2003	Christa M. Proper (Richmond NetWork)
12/09/2003	Nancy Parson
12/09/2003	Michael Lyons (Lyon Aviation, Inc.)
12/09/2003	Representative Peter Larkin
12/10/2003	Theodore Glockner
12/10/2003	Susan Lipton
12/10/2003	Wohrle's Food's, Inc.
12/10/2003	Tina & John Kirby
12/10/2003	Melanie Bessette
12/10/2003	The Linehan
12/11/2003	David LaPlante (Northern Berkshire Health Systems)
12/11/2003	Thelma Barzottini
12/11/2003	Senator Andrea Nuciforo
12/12/2003	Bertha Howard

12/12/2003	Joel Wiest
12/15/2003	Nathaniel Karns (Berkshire Regional Planning Comm.)
12/15/2003	Dona Beck (Banknorth)
12/15/2003	Robert Hiller
12/15/2003	Betsy Strickler (Winstanley)
12/16/2003	Norma and Jerome Strassler
12/16/2003	Raymond and Patricia Boudreau
12/17/2003	David Hathaway (Pittsfield Comm. Development Board)
12/17/2003	John G. Colpitts
12/17/2003	Egidio Altobelli
12/22/2003	Dr. Eileen Fielding
12/22/2003	Jane Winn
12/22/2003	Thomas Sakshaug
12/22/2003	Judith Rubins
12/22/2003	Robert Hiller
12/22/2003	Cecilia Rock
12/22/2003	Paul Yarmay
12/22/2003	Geoffrey Webb
12/22/2003	Jeffrey Cook
12/22/2003	Laurie Gallagher
12/24/2003	Liza Donlon
12/24/2003	Douglas Melle
12/24/2003	Division of Fisheries & Wildlife
12/24/2003	Mass Audubon
12/24/2003	DEP – WERO
12/26/2003	Theodore Ames (BNRC)
12/26/2003	Richard Haley
12/26/2003	Judith Walter
12/26/2003	Ryan Melle
12/29/2003	Thomas Stokes
12/29/2003	Gerald Gura
12/30/2003	Mike Tweed-Kent
12/31/2003	K.B Toys (17 FORMS LETTERS)
12/31/2003	# 319 FORM LETTERS

EOEA #12480

DEIR Certificate

January 2, 2004

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ERH/LED/led